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SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: MAY 22, 2009

Summary: Reports on the international pledge of "\$224 million for relief and rehabilitation of IDPs" dominated headlines in almost all newspapers on Friday. All dailies highlighted report that the "U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs approved a bipartisan legislation tripling American economic assistance to Pakistan." Reports and photographs of Ambassador Patterson's Lahore visit received prominent display. Her meetings with Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif, members of the American Business Forum, and visit to the Lahore Fort and the shrine of a 'Sufi' (mystic) saint Madhu Lal were also highlighted. Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman's remarks that "minimum nuclear deterrence would be maintained" received extensive media coverage. Newspapers also reported that President Obama "vowed not to back down on closing Guantanamo Bay."

Most major dailies ran editorials on a variety of subjects including the fallout of Swat military operation, plight of the internally displaced persons, and the U.S.-Pakistan relationship. The second-largest, center-right nationalist daily "Nawa-i-Waqt," observed that as "Secretary Clinton has realized that Pakistan's present problems are a result of U.S. policies of the 80s, the U.S. should admit its mistakes and instead of continuing this policy and creating problems for our security and existence, it should adopt a serious and workable policy to get us out of this quagmire." Another Urdu daily, "Express," wrote: "If the U.S. is sincere in its war on terror and if it wants Pakistan to succeed in the operation in the north-western areas, it needs to stop the sale of weapons by Afghan troops to the Taliban." Commenting on the Secretary Clinton's remarks, the Lahore-based liberal daily, "Daily Times," noted that the "U.S.-Pakistan relationship has endured because both have needed each other. There is hardly any incoherence in that." End Summary.

News Stories

"Donors Pledge \$224 Million For IDPs" "The News" (05/22)

"Pakistan on Thursday received pledges of \$224 million for relief and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons (IPDs) during a donors' meeting. However, the United Nations is to flash on Friday an appeal to the world, seeking about \$500-600 million, said Minister of State for Economic Affairs Division Hina Rabbani Khar in a press briefing."

"Maximum Support Assured By Donors" "Dawn" (05/22)

"The international community assured Pakistan on Thursday of maximum financial and material support for the relief and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons, but held back formal announcement till a flash appeal to be launched by the United Nations on Friday."

"U.S. House Panel Approves Bill To Triple Aid, But With Strings"
"Dawn" (05/22)

"The U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs has approved a bipartisan legislation tripling American economic assistance to Pakistan. The new legislation, once approved by both chambers of the U.S. Congress, will bring \$1.5 billion of annual aid to Pakistan for a period of five years, which can be extended with congressional approval. 'The legislation requires rigorous oversight and auditing,' says a press release issued by the panel."

"The U.S. Benchmarks, Audits And Controls On Kerry-Lugar Aid Bill"
"The News" (05/22)

"The Pakistan-specific Kerry-Lugar Bill, moved in the US Senate two weeks back, authorizes President Barack Obama to keep 'classified,' if necessary, U.S. persons or entities that have received funds in excess of \$250,000 to avoid a security risk and provide a justification for such classification. A clear overview emerging from the reading of the proposed legislation showed that its movers, Senators John F. Kerry (Democrat), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Richard Lugar (Republican), a senior member on the panel, realized that Pakistan needed monetary assistance and, therefore, was vulnerable. Washington will give this assistance but monitor it very tightly so that its policy objectives are achieved."

"U.S. Must Help Pakistan With Economic Aid, Says Kerry" "The News"
(05/22)

"Senator John Kerry underscored the need for continued U.S. support to help Pakistan take care of the people displaced from Swat military offensive launched to eliminate Taliban from Malakand region. Chairing on Thursday the Foreign Relations Committee that received testimony from Admiral Mike Mullen, the top U.S. military officer on U.S. policy toward Pakistan, Kerry recalled the goodwill engendered by the U.S. relief efforts in the post-2005 earthquake and called on building the current aid effort."

"Mullen Against Move To Link Aid With 'Rigid' Conditions" "Dawn"
(05/22)

"A senior U.S. Senator, Jim Webb, has moved an amendment to a bill before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, requiring Pakistan not to use American aid for the expansion of its nuclear program. During a hearing of the Committee on Thursday, Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, said his biggest concern was that 'conditioning all the money' meant for Pakistan could be counter-productive."

"U.S. House Panel Rejects India Tag To Pak Aid" "The Nation"
(05/22)

"A U.S. congressional Committee on Wednesday approved a giant aid package for Pakistan while dropping all conditions that referred to India."

"U.S. Ambassador Visits Alamgiri Gate To Mark Completion Of Conservation" "Dawn" (05/22)

"U.S. Ambassador Anne W. Patterson stressed the need to 'protect shared cultural heritage' on a visit to Lahore Fort's Alamgiri Gate, marking the completion of another U.S.- funded conservation project."

"U.S.-EU Ambassadors Call On Nawaz-Shahbaz Sharif; U.S. Should Stop Drone Strikes And Fulfill Promise Of Resolving Kashmir Issue: Nawaz Sharif" "Nawa-i-Waqt" (05/22)

"U.S. and EU Ambassadors yesterday held separate meetings with PML-N leaders Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mian Shahbaz Sharif.... Mian Nawaz Sharif said during the meeting that the U.S. should stop drone strikes and should fulfill the promise President Obama made after

election on resolving the Kashmir issue.... American Ambassador said that the U.S. understands the problems faced by Pakistan and would cooperate fully in the rehabilitation of refugees."

"Pak Economy Has Potential For Investment, Anne" "The Nation" (05/22)

"U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne W. Patterson has said that despite economic and security challenges, Pakistan's economy is growing with great potential for foreign investment. Pakistan's economy stabilized after it signed agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Patterson said while addressing the inauguration ceremony of American Business Forum (ABF) in Lahore on Thursday."

"Minimum N-Deterrence Will Be Maintained: FO" "Dawn" (05/22)

"Pakistan 'indirectly' confirmed on Thursday that it was in the process of expanding its nuclear program and said it was being done to maintain credible nuclear deterrence in view of the changing security environment in the region. 'Pakistan cannot remain oblivious to increasing conventional asymmetries, unrelenting arms acquisitions as well as preferential treatment being accorded to certain countries in the region,' Foreign Office spokesman Abdul Basit said at his weekly media briefing."

Obama Vows To Close Gitmo" "The News" (05/22)

"President Barack Obama on Thursday vowed not to back down on closing Guantanamo Bay despite raging controversy, branding the camp a 'mess' and decrying Bush-era anti-terror tactics as based on fear."

"IDPs Crisis Can Lead To Greater Unrest in Pakistan" "The Nation" (05/22)

"Five U.S. Senators have urged their President an immediate response to the crisis in the NWFP and to provide assistance to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs in Pakistan in order to ensure that it does not lead to greater unrest throughout the rest of the country."

"Pakistan Not So Imperiled: Mullen" "The News" (05/22)

"The top U.S. military officer said on Thursday he was concerned that the U.S. troop build up to roust insurgents from Afghanistan could further destabilize Pakistan. However, Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Admiral Mike Mullen, speaking to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said the military planning was under way to try to avoid that."

"Kayani Visits Daggar, Bucks Troops Up" "The News" (05/22)

"Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani on Thursday visited Daggar in the neighboring Buner district to see the ground situation and appreciated the morale exhibited by the troops in fight against militancy."

"No Need For U.S. Troops' Help: Kaira" "Dawn" (05/22)

"Minister for Information and Broadcasting Qamar Zaman Kaira rejected on Thursday reports about possibility of U.S. troops arriving in the country to support the government action in dealing with insurgency and rehabilitation of displaced persons. He said at a press conference that neither anyone had approached the government nor there was any need for such a move because the country's armed forces were fully capable of handling internal matters."

"Commander Surrenders In Mohmand; Taliban Agree To Leave Parts Of Lower Dir" "Dawn" (05/22)

"Taliban in Adenzai tehsil of Lower Dir district agreed on Thursday to wind up their camps and pull out of Asbanr and Gulabad areas within two days. According to sources, the assurance was given to a Jirga at a joint gathering of local people and Taliban. A local Taliban 'commander' gave himself up to authorities in Mohmand Agency on Thursday with five other militants."

"Captain Killed In Bomb Attack" "Dawn" (05/22)

"An army captain and a Lance Naik were killed and five other security men injured when their vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb near the Islam Darra security check-post on the Timergara-Maidan road on Thursday."

"Army Move To Block Supply Of Arms To Mingora Militants" "The News" (05/22)

"Security forces took control on Thursday of a major portion of the strategic Kamber bridge overlooking Mingora, military spokesman Maj. Gen. Athar Abbas said. According to defence sources, terrorists had built concrete bunkers and stored arms, ammunition and explosives in caves in the area. An intense operation was under way to stop the supply of weapons to militants in the town."

"Taliban Leader Killed In Swat Operation" "Daily Times" (05/22)

"Security forces said on Thursday that 'a number of Taliban' - including an important commander, Abu Tariq, and five soldiers were killed in 24 hours in the Swat operation, in the latest update on the military offensive, seven Taliban were apprehended, said the ISPR."

"Taliban Ousted By Kalam People" "Dawn" (05/22)

"Armed residents foiled an attempt by the Taliban to expand their reach in more areas of Swat Valley, officials said on Thursday. The attempted infiltration in Kalam indicated militants are feeling pinched by an army offensive and are seeking new shelter, while the local resistance suggested growing public confidence in the anti-Taliban operation."

"19 Killed In Dir Lower" "The News" (05/22)

"Nineteen people, including 11 suspected militants and three security forces personnel, were killed in the ongoing military operation and a roadside blast in the Maidan area of Dir Lower on Thursday."

"Nine Killed In Tank Suicide Blast" "Daily Times" (05/22)

"At least nine people - four civilians and five security personnel - were killed and 25 injured in a suicide attack near an FC fort in Jandola area of Tank on Thursday evening, a private TV channel reported."

"Thousands Flee As Waziristan Tense" "Daily Times" (05/22)

"Residents of South Waziristan are fleeing the agency amid a build up of forces by the army and the Taliban. 'Mehsuds are leaving their areas in Sarwakai and Ladah tehsils for fears of an operation,' local sources told 'Daily Times.'"

"Two 'Al Qaeda Men' Held, Explosives Seized" "Dawn" (05/22)

"The CID police in Karachi arrested on Thursday two suspected militants of Al Qaeda and seized from them explosives and weapons."

"Pakistan, India In 'Rare Anti-Terror Cooperation'" "Dawn" (05/22)

"As the Pakistan army battles extremists inside the country, Pakistan and India have begun sharing intelligence on militants, with the prodding of the United States, the Wall Street Journal disclosed on Thursday."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Pakistan's Problems And The U.S. Secretary Of State's Admission: Stop Supporting Military Dictators Now, " an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 150,000) (05/22)

"Now that Hillary Clinton has realized that Pakistan's present problems are a result of U.S. policies of the 80s, the U.S. should admit its mistakes and instead of continuing this policy and creating problems for our security and existence, it should adopt a

serious and workable policy to get us out of this quagmire. For this, it needs to stop the drone attacks immediately, stop conspiracies against our nuclear program and give up its practice of dictating our elected democratic civilian rulers like it has been dictating our military dictators."

"How 'Incoherent' Is Pak-U.S. Relationship?," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (05/22)

"The U.S.-Pakistan relationship has endured because both have needed each other. There is hardly any incoherence in that. There have been vicissitudes in it because one has global worries to take care of, and the other is regionally obsessed with India. Without reference to the U.S., it is for Pakistan to meditate over its single-item foreign policy: can it go on risking its survival by following an uncreative and imitative approach to its big neighbor, India."

"Aid Package For Swat Affectees," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir. 25,000) (05/22)

"Drone attacks are fanning anti-U.S. sentiment in the Pakistani public. Moreover, Afghanistan is constantly aiding the Taliban and it seems as if they [the Taliban] are continuously getting supplies. The proof of this is the New York Times report which reveals that weapons provided to the Afghan Army are being sold to the Taliban.... If the U.S. is sincere in its war on terror and if it wants Pakistan to succeed in the operation in the north-western areas, it needs to curb corruption in the Karzai government and stop the sale of weapons by Afghan troops to the Taliban."

"Worrisome," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (05/22)

"The 'New York Times' has revealed that the arms and ammunition seized from the militants had been supplied by the Afghan army.... It would be legitimate to suspect that militants inside Pakistan were also getting their supplies from them. Some of the militant outfits in Pakistan have been found using state-of-the-art military equipment smuggled from Afghanistan.... Obviously, this cannot happen without the necessary wherewithal and supply of arms. There is a strong suspicion, and in some well-informed circles strong conviction, both India and Afghanistan have a hand in it. It is a common enemy that the U.S., Afghanistan and Pakistan are fighting. But if the U.S. weapons continue to fall into the hands of militants who are also aided by New Delhi and Kabul, the hope for victory virtually recedes into oblivion."

"NYT Spills The Beans," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (05/22)

"The NYT report clearly shows that instead of demanding Pakistan to do more, the United States needs to do more to stop infiltration of militants and smuggling of weapons from Afghanistan to Pakistan. The issue is quite clear but regrettably Pakistani leadership has adopted a sheepish approach and has so far failed to take up the matter seriously with Washington or other capitals. It is time that Pakistan tells its 'friends' to stop double games and show sincerity in eliminating the threat of terrorism."

"Supply Line Of Weapons And Money To Taliban," an editorial in Hyderabad based liberal and independent Sindhi daily "Ibrat" (Cir. 80,000) (05/22)

"Besides fighting with Taliban we need to find out routes and sources of funding and weapons to Taliban. In case of Afghanistan, American papers are now reporting that American weapons may have been given to Taliban by Afghan officials. One should not forget the fact that some sections of the Pakistan Army have been reportedly working with Taliban. Likewise, Musharraf's whole era was an exponent of double game with the extremists and the U.S. It is vital to sever the supply-line of Taliban and other extremist elements."

"Friends Of Dictatorship: American Role," an editorial in Hyderabad based independent and liberal Sindhi Daily "Kawish" (cir 105,000) (05/22)

"Pakistanis know very well that the U.S. has always sided with Pakistani military dictators and when Ms. Clinton stated that, it was not really a big revelation for us. What is new is the admission on part of America's top-most diplomat that they committed mistake by supporting dictators and they were responsible for creating mess in Pakistan. Thankfully, Americans have learned their lesson in Pakistan and realized their mistakes albeit after three decades."

"State Of The Operation," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/22)

"It is clear people remain terrorized by the Taliban and anxious about a situation in which they may, some months down the road, return to a position of power.... So often have people seen a half-hearted action against the Taliban, so many 'stops and starts' have they witnessed, that they still lack faith that this time, the operation is in earnest.... Lifting the sense of fear these men cause will act to weaken (Taliban), to loosen their grip and to demoralize their forces.... This spirit must be built on and taken further. Eventually it will play a big part in the defeat of the Taliban and in the reclaiming mental space from them."

"Pakistan's First (Or Rather Second) True War," an op-ed by Ayaz Amir in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/22)

"Mullah Omar and the Americans can fight it out among themselves. That quarrel is none of our business and we should be no part of it. But the Taliban in Pakistan are very much our problem because their ideas and the idea of Pakistan just cannot co-exist. So while the Americans are fighting their Taliban for their reasons, we have our own compelling reasons to fight our home-grown Taliban.... Of course it depends on us how we make use, or how we exploit, this convergence of interests between us and the Americans.... How long will this war last? We should be under no illusions on this score. It will last as long as the Americans stay in Afghanistan.... So we should prepare for the long haul as these dark clouds which encircle us are not going to go away in a hurry."

"Taliban - Asset Or Enemy?," an op-ed by Saleem Safi in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (05/22)

"The fact is that the problem of militancy will not be solved with the success of the Swat operation because what is happening in Swat and Dir is a part of a game being played in the region. And peace will not be achieved unless militancy is eliminated from the whole region. However, confusion surrounding the operation must be cleared because at the moment it is benefiting the militants.... Thus the Pakistani establishment is confused whether to treat the militants as enemies or assets. When these militants target the Marriott in Islamabad, they are the number one enemies of security forces but when they attack the Indian embassy in Kabul then they act like an asset."

"Now South Waziristan IDPs," an editorial in the Islamabad-based rightist English daily "Pakistan Observer" (cir. 5,000) (05/22)

"The United States, western countries and some quarters within are persuading the Government to launch a simultaneous operation in Waziristan.... There could be many more arguments on merits and demerits to the launching of operation in Waziristan but the civil and military leadership must see that dragging feet by extending the operation may not backfire.... Therefore, we would strongly recommend the Government not to take hasty decisions as there is no serious uprising in Waziristan, and to concentrate on cleansing Swat from miscreants and rehabilitation of the IDPs before moving to FATA."

"Growing Threats," an editorial in the Karachi-based, pro-Taliban Jihadi Urdu daily "Islam" (cir. 15,000) (05/22)

"It seems that the U.S. media continues its customary anti-Pakistan propaganda drive, and it is also affecting the U.S. senior officials too. Perhaps that is the reason that the U.S. Admiral Mike Mullen had maintained last week that Pakistan was adding to its nukes. Such reports also confirmed that the U.S. is coveting for Pakistani nuclear program. We cannot rule out possibility of U.S. hand behind insurgency in Swat, Malakand and other adjoining areas."

"U.S. Obsession To Reach To Pakistan Nukes And Taliban's Attitude,"
an editorial in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf"
(cir. 10,000) (05/22)

"U.S. administration seeks to enter into Pakistan somehow to besiege
Pakistan nuclear facilities. That is why it is exerting pressure on
the government of Pakistan under the pretext that Pakistani nukes
may fall to Taliban. This conjecture is totally baseless and
nonsense that Taliban can ever break down the Pak military shield,
and enter into Pakistani nuclear facilities."
Patterson